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From the Los Angeles Times

House votes to override Bush's farm bill veto

A paperwork glitch leaves their vote, and his veto, in question.

By Stephen J. Hedges

Chicago Tribune

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WASHINGTON — President Bush vetoed the long-embattled 2007 farm bill Wednesday, saying it provides subsidies for farmers at a time of record crop prices, increases farm spending by \$20 billion and uses "budget gimmicks to hide much of that increase."

Within hours, in a show of bipartisan defiance, the House overwhelmingly overrode his veto of the nearly \$300-billion bill, 316 to 108.

But an embarrassing legislative snafu may well nullify the House's veto override and trigger a string of new votes that could reopen the farm bill for consideration.

The mix-up occurred in the House, which along with the Senate overwhelmingly approved a final version of the bill last week. The House, however, sent the White House the final version of the bill minus one 34-page section.

Because the White House did not receive the entire farm bill, House leaders were left wondering whether Bush's veto, and their override vote, was legitimate.

The Associated Press reported late Wednesday that the House may have to vote to reapprove the bill in an expedited manner today, send it back to Bush for a new veto, then hold another override vote.

One House aide involved in the discussions said it was unclear to leaders how to proceed.

Bush opposed the bill even when the missing section was included, so there is little chance that a new measure would change his mind. In his veto message, he criticized the level of subsidies for farmers, who are enjoying prosperous times with high commodity and land prices.

"At a time when net farm income is projected to increase by more than \$28 billion in one year, the American taxpayer should not be forced to subsidize that group of farmers who have adjusted gross incomes of up to \$1.5 million," Bush said.

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, said, "The president's veto of this measure is an attempt to deny America these forward-looking initiatives at a time when the country needs them the most."

Critics of the bill argued that a veto was warranted because of Congress' failure to cut the large subsidies that farmers receive, even though many experts and policymakers argue that the subsidies are counterproductive, unfair and distort agriculture policy. The largest subsidies go to farmers simply for owning land and growing

crops. They will be more than \$5 billion a year.

Proponents of the bill said it balanced the need to support farmers and conservation with the nutrition needs of those on food stamps and with other programs, such as a healthy school snack program.

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